

FREEDOM 'VITAL' IN MERGER

CONSUMER RESEARCH SET CONDITION

In any merger which may be contemplated between the new Association for Consumer Research and the Consumer Advisory Council of the British Standards Institution, the association are determined not to sacrifice what they regard as their main asset—*independence of industry*. The fact that a proposal for amalgamation was under consideration was announced in *The Times* on January 9.

In a statement published yesterday the association—known as C.R.—say: "There is a great deal to be said for competition—it should keep both bodies on their mettle, and we in C.R. are confident that we shall gain from it as we have done in the last three months. On the other hand, there is something to be said for coming together—some money would, for instance, be saved on purchases of goods and testing them."

"We are prepared at any time to discuss the whole idea with the B.S.I., but only on one vital condition; this is that any new body which might be created is not part of B.S.I., but is entirely independent of industry. . . . There is no question of our giving up our independence."

HIRE PURCHASE SURVEY

The association now intend to embark on a nation-wide survey of hire purchase terms. They have already obtained hire purchase and credit sales terms for a special type of bed from several London shops and they have found that the cost of borrowing the money on hire purchase varied from about 9 per cent. to about 19 per cent. They are appealing to their members to give information about hire purchase terms and contracts they have entered into.

Goods which are shortly to be the subject of C.R. surveys include sheets, children's socks, cosmetics, ball point pens, spin driers, detergents, nylons, motor insurance, steam irons and cures for baldness.

In the second issue of their quarterly magazine *Which?*, published to-day, five different makes of electric convector heater are discussed. All were deemed safe, convenient, and efficient. They vary in price from £19 1s. 8d. to £9 7s., and in C.R.'s view the cheapest heater is as satisfactory as the dearest. Efficiency and durability were among the factors taken into account, but appearance played no part.

CHEAP AS GOOD AS DEAR

Of 12 talcum powders examined, the cheapest cost 3½d. an ounce and the dearest 3s. The report says there seemed to be little to choose between the various brands. "You may choose a powder for its scent or for its packaging or other subjective qualities," the report continues, "but if you do not, the talcum powders can be judged by their price an ounce."

Two brands of Polythene hot water bottles were tested. One was given unqualified approval, but the other is reported to be of faulty design, and made from a material of low softening point. C.R. see no reason at present for changing from rubber hot water bottles to Polythene.

Eight fog lamps were arranged in order of efficiency by C.R. who put two German lamps and a French lamp at the head of the list. Eleven branded stomach powders tested varied considerably in price, but as far as the ingredients were concerned C.R. see no reason for the great difference. They believe that bicarbonate of soda, which may cost as little as ¾d. an ounce, has much the same effect as some branded powders costing up to 60 times as much.

C.R. can already exhibit one tangible success. The manager of the factory which makes a kettle criticized in the first issue of *Which?* has written to the association to say that because of their criticism a stronger gauge aluminium strip is being substituted in the handle to strengthen an alleged weakness, and an alleged fault in the spout is being corrected.

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